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Daily Review of the Syrian press for 24 and 26 November 1948.

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# AMERICAN LEGATION

★ DAMASCUS ★

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## Daily Review of the Syrian Press

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43456

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PRESS DIGEST No. 224, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1948.

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### NEWSPAPERS REVIEWED:

Alef Ba', Al Fayha', Al Manar, Al Insha', Al Kifah,  
Al Balad, Al Qabas, Al Ayyam, An Nazir, Ad-Duha,  
and Al J abal.

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MISCELLANEOUS NEWS Return to CIA Library

### VERY WISE STEP!...

Alef Ba': The economic meeting summoned by the Minister of the National Economy was held yesterday at 5:00 p.m. in the Finance Minister's Office. The Conferees discussed the economic situation in the light of the Lebanese newly established free currency market. The meeting which recessed at 7:30 p.m. will be resumed at 4:00 p.m. today to further discuss the advisability of establishing a free exchange market in Syria along with Lebanon.

### RAISE OF COST OF LIVING IN SYRIA:

Alef Ba': The Council of Ministers has decided to raise the prices of bread by 2.5, 5, and 10 Piasters Syrian per kilo according to its quality, hence a new augmentation of 20% in the cost of living is effected.

CABINET...

(Pr.Dig.224/2)

CABINET RESHUFFLE?...

Al Kifah: The Republicans as well as the Nationalists are inclined to comply with the request of the President of the Republic to form a strong national Cabinet. The Populists state that they have not yet officially approached on the subject. They are, nevertheless, prepared to study every proposal presented to them and then either comply with it when consistent, or refuse it when contrary.

From very reliable sources comes the news that a strong understanding exists between the Nationalist and Republican leaders and the former is prepared to support the present Cabinet in all cases, whether participating in it or not.

ATTEMPT TO BLOW UP AN NASR:

Al Manar: A beige colored lorry stopped in front of An Nasr's printing Office at 2:00 a.m. yesterday and a bomb was thrown. The explosion injured certain employees and damaged the windows.

The lorry then drove towards Beirut. The duty Police at the Kiwan Post having been informed by telephone of the incident, attempted to stop the lorry, but were fired on and swiftly passed.

Minute inquiries into the incident are being carried out by the Security Department as it caused a great discontent in the city.

ARREST OF NATIONALS IN TJ:

Al Manar: According to news from Amman, the Transjordan authorities have laid hand on and imprisoned a number of Liberal Nationals, including Dayf Beyal-Hamrad, Ratib Darwaza, Mahmud al-Mutalik, Bashir Khattab, and Dr. Nabih al-Rushaydat.

SELECTION OF JABAL DRUZE DEPUTIES:

Al Kifah: The following were selected to represent Jabal Druze in the present Chamber of Deputies:

Jamil Abu Asali, Da'ud al-Hindi, Nayef Nasr, Husayn al-Shawqi, for Jabal Druze, and Aqla al-Qutami for the minorities.

In the ....

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In the Thursday meeting of reconciliation, the aforementioned persons will be nominated as deputies and then sent to Damascus. They are most welcome.

GOVERNMENT'S TIMIDITY ENCOURAGES CRIMES:

Al Qabas: Under this heading the Nationalist paper 'Al Qabas' writes in part:

We reiterate to-day that the lack of punishments, and particularly administrative punishments are the factors which encourage the crimes and attacks. The incident of An Nasr gave a new proof that certain citizens no more care to resort to Court but prefer to take their revenges with their own hands.

With the release of those who conducted an attack on the Nationalist Party Office, those who had led the demonstrators in 1939 against the National Regime with the assistance of the French; with the release of those who were permitted by the Directorate of the Police to reach the Nationalist Office, we reiterate that the signs of downfall which was commenced in 1939 with the protection of the French is today appearing in a bigger form.

When the Nationalist Party Office was attacked yesterday, and An Nasr to-day, and when the instigators and the attackers are tolerated and apologetically released, there would come a day when they will launch an attack on the office of the President of the Council of Ministers, for the nerves of the leaders are weak.

JEWISH CLAIMS REPRODUCED IN AMERICAN PAPERS:

Alef Ba': The following was broadcast by the Damascus Radio:

"The American 'New York Sunday' has published a report among its misleading news that the Druzes are participating in the fight in Palestine on the side of the Zionist gangs, that they are in contact with them, and other similar allegations insinuated by the Zionists through the American and Foreign press correspondents.

"These unfounded reports which the Zionists Press Depts. spread indicate not only complete ignorance in the maturity of the Syrians and the nationalist feeling of Syrian citizens, but also the foolish propaganda of the Zionists which meets with

the disgust...

(Pr.Dig.224/4)

the disgust of the readers. Similarly disgusting are the reports and intrigues published and announced by the Zionist propaganda circles. Undoubtedly, these reports only add to the feeling of hatred against the Jews, and inspire the readers and audience to despise them."

SYRIAN MERIT MEDALS TO TWO TRANSJORDANIANS:

Alef Ba': A decree was issued granting the Syrian Merit Medal, Grade I, to the two Transjordanian notables: Sabri Pasha al-Tabba' and Iema'il Pasha al-Bilbaysi.

LABOR STRIKE AGAINST ELECTRICITY COMPANY:

Alef Ba': A great number of industrial laborers demonstrated yesterday in the streets of the Capital in protest against cutting electric current. They met the competent authorities and requested their intervention for putting an end to the despotism of the electric company, particularly because it disturbs the commerce especially the textiles and food production. The demonstrators dissociated after they were promised that the problem would soon be solved.

NATIONALISTS'S BITTER ATTACK OF AN NIDAL

Al Fayha': Taking the lead in the attack on An Nidal this Nationalist paper writes in part:

We urged Dr. Sami Kabbara to disown the attack on the Nationalist Party office if he was not the instigator, in courtesy to 40 MPs, and 20 journalists, all his colleagues and members of the Nationalist Party. Instead he wrote the following:

Yesterday's incident was not an instigation, neither was that of 1939...

The population raised in 1939 against your conspiracy and against French colonisation and 1936 Alliance. Had there not been that anger in 1939, the country would have been ceded to the French and the independence which you alone benefit of had not been obtained...

You destroyed the country until you banished the Independence and lost Palestine...

Because you are interested in the independence of the country's properties and funds, and not its sovereignty...

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sovereignty, even at the cost of its annihilation.

Do not concern yourself much of the year 1936... Your President personally admitted in 1943 and in front of the populace that the mistakes of 1936 would not be repeated and must be forgotten.

Yes, the mistakes of 1936 have not returned but your terrific actions in 1943-1948 made the population forget the mistakes of 1936.... "

Editor Tillawi comments:

How comparative is the year of 1948 with 1939 when those 'gangsters' driven for crimes against the Nationals created false allegation to banish the Alliance and its supplements. They blew up the Nationalist houses, destroyed the Republican regime, the Parliamentary life, and dispersed the Nationalists.

Just as they had as pretexts the stories of the Supplements of the Alliance of 1936, to-day they have the problem of Palestine... What have they done for Palestine?.. Have they volunteered for Jihad, contributed for the cause or distributed bread to the dispersed Palestinians?...

No, they have not done anything of the sort..., for the countries future does not interest them...

The editor then goes on to state the population's disgust of the attack on the Nationalist Party Office. A number of them have called on the President of the Republic expressing their disapproval.

So did a number of Nationalist Deputies who additionally presented to the President a letter of protest.

The Damascus Branch of the Nationalist Party also visited the President and presented to him their protest.

Cables of disgust have been received by the Party from various Syrian Muhafazats.

#### P A L E S T I N E

#### IRAQI FORCES ADVANCE IN NEGEV:

Al Kifah: Amman 23- Despite the Security Council orders, the Zionists continue their aggression in Negev.

Iraqi....

(Pr.Dig.224/6)

Iraqi forces have conducted an advance along a 20 kilometer front beginning from Hebron with the attempt of joining the Egyptian forces following the evacuation of the Jewish forces from this district.

PALESTINIAN STUDENTS IN AMERICA:

Alef Ba': The US Government has announced that Palestinian students in America shall henceforth be permitted to work in view of the disturbed condition in Palestine, since they are encountered with a serious financial crisis. Accordingly, the Director of the American-Arab Affairs Institution has contacted all universities and requested that all assistance be given to the Palestinian students in this respect.

JEWISH AGENTS SCATTERED BETWEEN REFUGEES:

Alef Ba': The Government has received yesterday a report detailing the ways of contraband used between the Turkish shores and Palestinian ports under control of the Zionists. The report says:

Meat, eggs, butter and other commodities are shipped on small steam boats from Mersin in Turkey, and sometimes from Alexandretta, to Tel Aviv and Haifa. It is expected that talks will be conducted between the Arab states on one part and Turkey on the other to put an end to the contraband activities between Turkey and Palestine.

The Competent departments are investigating into a problem of an Armenian who bought iron pieces looted from the Potash Co. in Jericho and carried them to Cyprus and thence they were shipped to the Jews in Palestine.

Another investigation is being carried out in the case of a Jew directing an office in Beirut and offering money to the poor refugees in return for mortgaging their properties in Palestine which are now under Zionist control. He further buys the properties of the refugees who do not hope to return to Palestine. It is learned that this office employs refugees experienced in brokery and sends them over to Syria to carry out similar transactions with the refugees there.

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## Daily Review of the Syrian Press

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RESTRICTED - (For Staff Use Only.)

PRESS DIGEST No.225, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1948

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### NEWSPAPERS REVIEWED:

Alef Ba', Al Fayha', An Nasr, Al Alam, Al Insha';  
Al Kifah, Al Qabas, Al Ayyam, An Nazir, Ash-Shabab,  
Al Manar, Ad-Duha, and Al Jabal.

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### MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

#### FREE EXCHANGE MARKET IN SYRIA:

Al Ayyam: The economic meeting which was recessed for Wed. evening at 4:00 was actually resumed in the office of the Finance Minister to continue with the discussion of the present economic crisis in Syria. The conferees, mostly leading financiers and traders, unanimously agreed that the enforcement of the recent Lebanese decision, without a counter measure by Syria, would cause the transfer of the Syrian trade to Lebanon and result with the increase of the difference between the Syrian and the Lebanese currencies.

The conferees insisted upon the Government the adoption of hasty and decisive measures to avoid losses to the Syrian economy. They requested the Government to be lenient with the exporters and importers, to open a free foreign exchange market and to liquidate all financial reations with France.



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Following the termination of the meeting the Acting Finance Minister reported to the President on the results of the meeting in order that necessary decrees be issued accordingly.

#### DETERIORATION OF ECONOMY IN SYRIA:

##### Petrol Crisis:

Al Ayyam: Petrol crisis in Syria has developed badly enough as to effect the commercial activities in the country. Leading merchants have cabled to Iraq, Rumania, and Teheran requesting purchase of this commodity if available. Replies are expected within the coming few days.

##### Labor Strikes And Suspensions:

While Ash-Shabab paper of Aleppo reports the return to work of 8,000 industrial workers (See Pr.Dig.223/5) following the employers consent to satisfy their claims regarding the fixation of salaries, Al Alam, the Labor Organ in Damascus, reports the regrettable suspension of 400 tanners on account of interruption of electric current of their industry. They have visited the 'paper's office and urged the adoption of severe measures against 'those who play around with the interests of the people'. They also visited the Muhafazat of Damascus with a similar request.

##### Electric Company's Threats:

Unless mazotte is supplied, the electric Company would be compelled to cut off the electric current as from 11 a.m. Thursday, Al Kifah reports. The Muhafazat of Damascus has already been threatened, the paper concludes.

##### State's Expenditures:

An Nasr: An army of civil servants swallows 93.5 million Syrian Pounds from the State's budget of 1949, writes this paper and proves its statement with the following figures:

In the year 1945 only 35.5% of the Budget went to the State officials, while in 1946 the rate went up to 48%, in 1947 to 49.5 and in the year 1948 to 50%. In 1949, 50.8% of the Budget will go to the officials.

In a State (Syria) with a population not exceeding 4.5 million there are presently 20,825 Civil Servants, with 1344

officials...

(Pr. Dig. 225/3)

officials than in 1948. With simple equation we come to a conclusion that to every 172 citizens there is one state official; this is comparatively great, as it would mean that in the present economic downfall each taxpayer will have to pay 45.71 Pounds Syrian in order to cop up with the expenses thus incurred. This taxpayer will naturally fail to pay this amount because of the decrease of his income owing to the lack of a sound and stable economic policy in the country.

The paper then advises the members of the Parliament to discuss the matter carefully as the whole responsibility of the country's future is laid upon them...

#### Interruption of Press:

Owing to the constant interruption of electric currents Al Balad and Al Fayha have announced their regretable suspension until further notice.

#### ALWAYS PROTESTING:

Al Ayyam: This paper along with the Nationalist papers continued today to publish text of cables received from the various Syrian cities protesting against the attack on the Nationalist Party Office.

#### FIRST DRAFTEES IN TRAINING CAMPS:

Alef Ba': Draftees for the Service of the Flag have arrived yesterday in the Capital from the Muhafazas of Huran, Homs, Hama, and Salamiyya. They were received in Damascus with applause, while they were singing national songs. They proceeded then to the barracks at Qatana.

#### AVIATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN TURKEY AND SYRIA:

Alef Ba': The Syrian Government has agreed to conduct talks with the Turkish Government for concluding an aviation agreement between the two countries. Talks are expected to start next week.

#### PROGRAM OF THE VISIT OF UNESCO DELEGATIONS:

Alef Ba': The Minister of Public Instruction has arrived in Damascus to make preparations for the visit of Damascus of the UNESCO delegations next Sunday. The program will consist

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of going on foot around the Syrian University, the National Antiquity Dept., the Mosque of Sultan Salim, the Al-'Azam Palace, through Madhat Pasha market, the Ommayyad Mosque, and Suq al-Hamidiyyeh. They will then take their cars from al-Hamidiyyah through the streets of An Nasr, Rami, the Marjeh, the Serail, Victoria Bridge, to Muhajirin along the Tramline. They will return then through streets of Abu al-'Ala, Parliament, Brazil, Faruq Victoria, Sa'd-Allah al-Jabiri, until the Orient Palace where a lunch party will be given in their honor.

#### TRUTH IN RAYYIS' CASE:

Al Kifah: This paper reveals the facts behind the assault on Munir al-Rayyis. It writes: Munir al-Rayyis approached Muhsin al-Barazi, while the latter held the Interior portfolio, asking his intercession with the Muhafiz of Aleppo for the classification of Rayyis' brother. The Muhafiz refused the recommendation of the Minister in this respect, and Rayyis' brother remained unclassified. Rayyis got angry, and sent the well known cable to the President accusing the Minister, cable for which he was imprisoned. After his release, he started his campaign against Barazi in his paper. These attacks could not be tolerated by the Barazi family, and drove the Minister's nephew, Faysal, to attack the life of Munir al-Rayyis, the attack which was condemned by every wise man, including the Minister himself.

### P A R L I A M E N T

#### MEETING, November 25, 1948:

An Nasr: When the decrees accepting the resignation of the Nationalist Ministers and of Wahbi al-Hariri were read at the beginning of the meeting, Adib Nassur (Hama-Ind) pointed out that "five stars have disappeared, and it is the right of the House and the people to learn the reasons for their resignation." Dawalibi (Aleppo-P) demanded an official statement and quoted a declaration by one of the resigning ministers that "it is not possible to work in a government characterized with bribery and disrespecting law."

Bakri (Damascus-P) drew the attention of the Government to the petrol crisis, to the lamentable condition of women and old people running with empty tins after kerosene carts, and to the factories' cessation of work because of inadequate and interrupted electricity.

Speaker....

Speaker Haffar answered that the Ministers have apparently assumed that the meeting would be held at five instead of 4:00 p.m. and hence have not shown up. He urged the deputies to limit their discussion to the questions on the agenda until the arrival of the ministers.

When the Secretary started to read the bills submitted by Parliament, Qanbar (Aleppo-P) reiterated his previous demand to hold a special meeting to discuss taxation. Homs (Aleppo-P) asked the Speaker to demand from the Government to write to the Turkish Government and request a copy of the Taxation Report prepared by a professor of economy in the University of Istanbul.

The meeting recessed for 15 minutes until the arrival of the Ministers. It was resumed when Mardam, Ghazzi, Rifa'i, and Barazi arrived. When the secretary read the names of the deputies selected in the new parliamentary committees, Dawalibi speaking on behalf of the People's Party declared the withdrawal of the Party's deputies from these committees. So did a number of Independents who declared their support to the People's deputies and their resignation from the committees too.

The People's Party deputies next criticized the augmentation of the number of civil servants. Siba'i (Homs-P) pointed out that there is a civil servant for every 176 inhabitants, a condition unusual in the whole world.

When the Secretary started to read the budget's bill, H. urani (Hama-P) objected reasoning that the House should first discuss the new bills of taxation. The Speaker adjourned the meeting until 5:00 p.m. of next Thursday to give time to the deputies to study the details of the budget. Before the deputies dispersed, Premier Mardam stood and said:

"I am aware of your and the people's desire to learn the various developments of the Palestine question. Therefore, I propose the holding of a special meeting next Monday evening which I recommend to be a close one. If the House wants it to be public, the Government does not object provide that the Government's statement be read in a secret meeting."

A number of deputies approved, but Kikhya (Opposition Leader) remarked that there is no need for secrecy, since the Palestine question has become an international one, and further the people are anxious to hear the developments for themselves.

Mardam

(Pr.Dig.225/6)

Mardam answered that there are questions which should be kept secret, and therefore, the Government is anxious to deliver a statement in a secret meeting. Yet, if the House finds out that it could be revealed to the public, it could decide so.

At the request of Kikhiya, the Speaker asked the deputies to vote whether they prefer a secret or public meeting, and the majority voted for a secret meeting.

## P A L E S T I N E

### TWO REASONS FOR FAILURE OF ARAB ARMIES:

Alef Ba': In the meeting of the 'Iraqi Parliament, Premier Muzahim al-Fajaji attributed the failure of the Arab Armies to liberate Palestine to two reasons: first, the first truce, and second, the non-unification of the Arab Armies' commands. The Prime Minister then stated: "The Arab States have always been avoiding the unification of command for no reasons I know of, with the exception of Syria, which has always welcomed this step." He concluded: "We still have a big chance to liberate the Holy Land, on condition we unify our commands and meet the Jews in a state of military unification."

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